CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE ON DISARMAMENT

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Message from Richard M. Nixon, President of the United States of America, to the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament

"I have followed closely the activities of the spring session of the Disarmament Committee, and Ambassador Smith has reported to me on the prospects for progress in the near future.

"As the conference resumes its work after a recess of six weeks, I would like to address the following thoughts to the members of the committee:

"First, the ground has been prepared for concrete arms control negotiations. In addition to the valuable suggestions by many members of the committee, draft agreements have been submitted by the United States and by the Soviet Union to prevent an arms race on the seabeds. Although differences exist, it should not prove beyond our ability to find common ground so that a realistic agreement may be achieved that enhances the security of all countries.

"The framing of an international agreement to apply to more than 100 million square miles of the earth's surface lying under the oceans is a high challenge to our vision and statesmanship. I ask the participants in this committee to join with us in elaborating a measure that is both practical and significant. With goodwill on all sides and a fair measure of hard work, we may achieve agreement in the course of this session. With each passing day the seabed becomes more important for the security and well-being of all nations. Our goal should be to present a sound seabed arms control measure to the General Assembly of the United Nations.

"Second, the Secretary-General of the United Nations is issuing a study on the effects of chemical and biological warfare. Experts from many countries have contributed to this important work. I am pleased that an expert from the United States, Dr. Ivan Bennett, has also played a role in the study. We welcome the Secretary General's study, since it will draw the attention of all mankind to an area of common concern.

"The delegation of the United States is prepared to examine carefully, together with other delegations, any approaches that offer the prospect of reliable arms control in this field.

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"Third, in my letter to Ambassador Smith on March 18 at the opening of the first session of this committee, I reaffirmed United States support for the conclusion of a comprehensive test ban adequately verified; I stated my conviction that efforts must be made toward greater understanding of the verification issue. I am pleased that, during your first session, serious exploration of verification problems took place. The United States delegation will be prepared to continue to participate in efforts towards greater understanding of this key issue. It is only by means of careful study, with due regard for all of the relevant technical and political considerations, that progress can be made.

"Fourth, I recently announced that the United States hopes to be able to commence talks with the Soviet Union on strategic arms limitations around July 31 or shortly thereafter. When these talks begin, which I hope and trust will be soon, they will of necessity be bilateral negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union. The United States Government is, however, deeply conscious of its responsibilities to its allies and to the community of nations.

"While these talks progress, it is particularly important that multilateral negotiations continue in this committee in an atmosphere of determination and promise. Arms control is without dispute a subject of direct concern to all nations, large and small. The wisdom, the advice, and the informed concern of many nations are needed in a continuing body such as this to ensure that no opportunities are missed to achieve genuine progress.

"This committee clearly is the world's preeminent multilateral disarmament forum. Its record of accomplishment, which needs no recital here, is greater than that of any other disarmament committee in history. I trust that your committee will continue its efforts with all of the combined skill and dedication which its members have demonstrated in the past.

"The negotiation of sound arms control and disarmament, like all work contributing to peace, must be an integrated and comprehensive effort. Progress in the tasks of your committee will be a contribution to a world of peaceful international co-operation, a world where fear and conflict are supplanted by the honest give-and-take of negotiation aimed at meeting the legitimate aspirations of all.

"The United States will work in every way to bring us closer to such a world."

OSITORY